

Appendix C

History of the City



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PALEOINDIAN – CHUMASH PERIOD (BEFORE 1782)

Santa Barbara's history extends back at least 8,000 years to its first human settlements. In 1769 when the Spanish Portola Expedition visited this area, they found a thriving village of approximately 600 Chumash located at the beach, west of the mouth of Mission Creek. Archaeological evidence indicates that this village had been continuously inhabited for at least 800 years before contact with the Spanish. Led by Yanonalit, the villagers were hunters and gatherers and were oriented to the sea. They were known for the quality of their tools and their wood plank canoes called *tomols*, in which they fished and crossed the Santa Barbara Channel to gather bird eggs on the islands.

SPANISH PERIOD (1782 – 1821)

To establish a foothold in Alta California, beginning in 1769 the Spanish Crown constructed four royal presidios (forts), one of which was in Santa Barbara, and it established 20 Franciscan missions along the coast from present day San Diego to San Francisco. The Santa Barbara presidio was the last to be established, on April 21, 1782. The first comandante, Captain Jose Francisco Ortega, oversaw construction of a temporary wood fort in 1782. Then, beginning in 1784, a large adobe presidio was constructed using military and Chumash labor. The presidio housed the soldiers and their families for a Spanish military district ranging from San Luis Obispo to Los Angeles.

Padre Fermin Lasuen founded the Mission Santa Barbara on St. Barbara's Day, December 4, 1786. At that time, Padre Lasuen oversaw the construction of a small wooden church. This was followed by larger churches built of adobe in 1789 and 1793. A major earthquake destroyed the 1793 church in 1812. It took five years to construct a new church built of sandstone. The second tower was added in 1833, giving the mission its iconic symmetrical façade.

A dam and aqueduct system was constructed about 1.5 miles up Mission Canyon in 1806 to provide water to the growing community living on mission grounds. The reservoir near the Mission was so well built that it was used to store water for the City of Santa Barbara until 1993, when it was transferred from Public Works to the Parks Department as part of Mission Historical Park.



Reconstructed Chapel and Comandante's Quarters at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park, 125 E. Canon Perdido

Like the Mission, the presidio was damaged by the 1812 earthquake. Over the succeeding decades, the presidio lost its military importance and gradually fell into disrepair. In payment for their service to the Spanish Crown, former presidio soldiers were given land grants located adjacent to the presidio. In the ensuing years, a pueblo, characterized by small single-story adobe houses connected by irregular paths began to take form around the deteriorating fort. Often consisting of only one room, these simple unadorned adobe structures reflected the available building materials (earth, rough-hewn logs, and marsh reeds). Their simplicity of form and materials and link to the city's Hispanic heritage would eventually inspire the modern city's architecture.

MEXICAN PERIOD (1821 – 1848)

The Spanish period continued until 1821 when, as a result of the Mexican Revolution which began in 1810, Mexico achieved its independence from Spain and California became a Mexican territory. Santa Barbara continued to develop slowly as a Mexican pueblo. It was not until the late 1830's that the lucrative hide and tallow trade made several Santa Barbara families wealthy. While a number of large houses were built in the pueblo by families such as the Arrellaneses, Aguirres, De la Guerras, and Carrillos, Santa Barbara, for the most part, remained a small community of modest adobe houses scattered around the decaying remains of the presidio.

During this period, Mission Santa Barbara was secularized and a portion of its lands were sold to Daniel Hill by Governor Pio Pico. Though Hill acquired much of the Mission's property, he allowed the Franciscan friars to remain in the cloister and continue to hold services in the church. As a result, Mission Santa Barbara has the distinction of being the only one of the 21 original California Missions to have continuously remained a place of worship.

Santa Barbara would continue to remain relatively slow-growing until California was ceded to the United States by the Mexican government at the conclusion of the Mexican-American war. Under the terms of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, largely dictated by the United States to the defeated Mexican government, Mexico agreed to sell California, Arizona, Nevada, parts of New Mexico and Utah plus other territory to the United States for 15 million dollars.



A Mexican style adobe, circa 1825

EARLY STATEHOOD - AMERICANIZATION PERIOD (1848 – 1887)

At the close of the Mexican-American War in 1848, California was under the control of the United States military. A constitutional convention in October, 1849, adopted a state constitution which prohibited slavery. A little more than one month later, the constitution was adopted in a state-wide vote. (Santa Barbarans voted 184 to 0 for it.) Approval of the admission of California was delayed in Congress by its debate on whether California would be admitted as a free or slave state. In the meanwhile, California's senators were elected, counties established, and Santa Barbara incorporated as an American city on April 9, 1850. Five months later California was finally admitted to the Union on September 9, 1850, as the 31st State.

As one of its first actions, the City Council hired Captain Salisbury Haley in the 1850s to survey the city and create an "American" grid street system to replace the existing winding pathways of the former pueblo. The overlay of a grid system resulted in the loss of a number of adobe buildings. A few streets were shifted to allow for the preservation of adobe homes. The most noticeable misalignment, at De la Guerra and Santa Barbara Streets, resulted from the position of an adobe, formerly located on De la Guerra Street just east of State Street. The survey created Estado (State) and Carrillo as the two principal streets defining the center of town with State Street marking the division between the "East" side and the "West" side of the cross streets.

As Americans migrated to Santa Barbara from the East Coast and Midwest, they showed little interest in building adobe structures. Instead, they introduced the type of wood frame construction with which they were familiar. However, growth was slow because of limited access to milled lumber. At this time, the main form of transportation was by ships sailing the coast between San Diego and San Francisco. Without a wharf in Santa Barbara, timber had to be offloaded by skiff or floated to shore. Significant changes in the city would not occur until the completion of Stearns Wharf in 1872. The deep-water wharf provided the city with dockage for ships, allowing passengers and freight, including building materials, to be conveniently brought into the city. This improved access, along with the city's beautiful setting and mild climate, made Santa Barbara increasingly more attractive as a tourist and health resort destination.

The construction of the wharf, introduction of tourism, and the anticipated arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad initiated a speculative real estate boom in the early 1880's. This proved to be short lived, however, when the nation entered a decade-long economic depression.

In response to the influx of visitors, the Upham Hotel opened in 1871 (it is still in operation) and the Arlington Hotel opened in 1875. Both offered the city's finest accommodations. In 1876 the city's first public transportation, in the form of a mule-car line, provided direct access to the Arlington Hotel from Stearns Wharf. The mule-car line was later extended along Cabrillo Boulevard to the Bath House at Castillo Street. The mule-cars operated for over 20 years.



The second Arlington Hotel, circa 1910

BOOM YEARS (1887 – 1902)

To much fanfare, the Southern Pacific Railroad finally arrived in Santa Barbara in 1887, providing regular service to Los Angeles. With this reliable and convenient transportation link to Los Angeles came the establishment of Santa Barbara as a premier destination for wealthy families from the East Coast, Midwest, and Europe, especially in the winter.

Grand resort hotels such as the Arlington and the Potter (built in 1902) catered to their guests' every need. New businesses and newly-constructed housing provided support for the city's growing tourism industry. Retail shops, restaurants, and recreational businesses continued to expand the Downtown core along State Street, while service and industrial enterprises were found on adjacent blocks. In addition, wealthy families began to construct homes in the Upper East and other sections of the City. These households also required services, which contributed to the expansion of the city's commercial development along State Street.

Services to the community increased dramatically when the city's first major medical center, Cottage Hospital, opened on December 8, 1891. Located in the Oak Park neighborhood, a largely undeveloped section of the city, the hospital was originally conceived as a group of separate cottages housing the institution's departments. Funding shortages resulted in the building of a single structure.

Reliable transportation became available when the Consolidated Electric Company was organized in 1896 to provide electric streetcar service in Santa Barbara. This streetcar system helped to establish Santa Barbara's earliest residential suburbs. The narrow-gauge tracks serviced East Beach and West Beach, State Street to the Arlington Hotel, and extended to Cottage Hospital.

Although situated in a beautiful natural setting, little of the city's architecture, with the exception of a few remaining adobes and Mission Santa Barbara, set it apart from any other late 19th Century community in the United States. Houses and commercial buildings in Santa Barbara were designed in the prevailing architectural styles of the day including Italianate, Stick/Eastlake, Folk Victorian, and Queen Anne. Subsequently, however, the Spanish and Mexican era adobes that had been rejected earlier by American newcomers gained a renewed interest in the late 19th Century.

Much of this newfound interest was spurred on by the romantic vision of Spanish Colonial and Mexican era California popularized through the paintings of California artists and the writings of authors such as Helen Hunt Jackson and Charles Fletcher Lummis. As a result, the California Missions became the inspiration for a new regional architectural style, the Mission Revival style. In Santa Barbara, three major buildings, the second Arlington Hotel (constructed in 1911 after a fire), the Potter Hotel (1902) and the Southern Pacific Railroad Station (1905), were constructed in the Mission Revival style. Noteworthy residential examples are the five Crocker Row houses on upper Garden Street. The style proved to be relatively short-lived, as the more popular Spanish Colonial Revival style grew in popularity, not only in Santa Barbara, but throughout the State.

The boom period and subsequent decades, not only brought native-born Americans from the East and Midwest, but immigrant groups from as far away as China, Japan, and Italy. For these newly-arrived ethnic groups, Santa Barbara, like most American cities at the time, had residential and commercial enclaves which provided a place for immigrants to both live and work where their culture and language predominated. In the early twentieth century, Chinatown occupied the first block of East Canon Perdido Street. Japanese immigrants resided in various parts of the city, but many chose to locate on the second block of East Canon Perdido Street. Scottish and Italian stone masons created most of the stone retaining walls, stone steps, and gate posts found throughout the city and, in particular, the Riviera neighborhood. Native Californians of

Spanish, Mexican and mestizo descent resided in neighborhoods near the site of the presidio, as well as in the East side, lower Downtown, and in Montecito.

DESIGN REVIEW ORIGINS (1902 – 1925)

Like many communities throughout the country, Santa Barbara became interested in city improvement and beautification. In March of 1902, the City Council appointed the first Board of Park Commissioners. Within two years, the Board added two important parks (Oak Park and East Beach Park, now known as Chase Palm Park) to the city's park system. In Oak Park more than 100 oak trees and other species were planted to give the park its natural, arcadian setting. Because of continued tree planting and maintenance throughout the city, Santa Barbara was officially designated a "Tree City USA" in 1980. It has retained that designation ever since. During this time period (and through at least 1931), various civic organizations purchased much of the Santa Barbara waterfront with the intention of assuring that it would be preserved in perpetuity for public use.

By the turn of the 20th Century, Santa Barbara had become a well-established destination for people from the Midwest and the East trying to escape the harsh winter months. In 1902, the 600-room Potter Hotel was constructed near West Beach. In 1911, this was followed by the completion of the equally grand new Mission Revival-style Arlington Hotel on State Street at Victoria which covered an entire city block. Both hotels were subsequently destroyed, the Potter by fire in 1921 and the Arlington, demolished in 1926 because of extensive damage from the 1925 earthquake.

In 1901, the long-awaited railroad link to San Francisco was completed. In 1905 a new Mission Revival-style train station was opened to travelers. During this time, the City's streetcar system was expanded with lines running from the beach to the Mission, and in 1913, up to the State Normal School campus located on the Riviera. At that time, the Riviera Development Company bought about 300 acres of land on Mission Ridge and built the roads, sandstone retaining walls, underground utilities, and planted hundreds of oak trees. This was one of the first subdivisions designed to have a cohesive visual appearance both in its landscaping and layout. Additionally, there were architectural standards requiring that lot owners build "Riviera style" houses featuring white stucco walls with red tile roofs and costing at least \$4,000, a significant amount for the time.

Shortly after the conclusion of World War I, Santa Barbara began to revamp its visual and cultural image. The nationally recognized architect Bertram G. Goodhue was hired to plan a new commercial streetscape (unbuilt) of Hispanic design. It was in the 1920's that the idea of protecting and furthering the city's Hispanic heritage was enthusiastically embraced. Civic leaders Bernhard Hoffmann and Pearl Chase of the Plans and Planting Committee, formed in 1922 as part of the Community Arts Association formed in 1919, were the driving force behind the movement to return Santa Barbara to its roots as a city reflecting its Hispanic heritage.

In 1922 a competition requiring the use of a "Spanish type" style was held for plans for a new city hall. Pearl Chase, dubbed "*Santa Barbara's Pearl*" continued to work tirelessly to beautify Santa Barbara until her death in 1979 at the age of 90. Between 1923 and 1925, the architects of the Santa Barbara Community Drafting Room, along with the Allied Architectural Association of Los Angeles, held a series of public exhibitions of drawings showing how individual blocks of State Street could be rebuilt using a unifying Hispanic architectural theme. This goal would ultimately be realized through the development of architectural guidelines aimed at the creation of a "New Spain in America." Until this point, Santa Barbara's downtown core mainly featured Victorian era brick-faced buildings, typical of any other city in America.

One year after the establishment of the Plans and Planting Committee, the city created a Planning Commission. The City adopted a building and zoning ordinance in 1925. At the urging of the Plans and Planting Committee, several important civic buildings were constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style between 1922 and 1924: City Hall, Santa Barbara High School, the original Roosevelt Elementary School, and the Lobero Theater. Additionally, several important commercial buildings were constructed during this period including El Paseo (1922-24; 1928-29). Built as a group of shops, apartments, restaurants, and offices around the historic Casa de la Guerra (1818-1828), El Paseo is still regarded today as one of the finest examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style for its design, massing, and details. In 1924, the city funded a “Street, Boulevard, and Park System Plan” designed by the nationally renowned city planner Charles Cheney. Though most of Cheney’s plan was not implemented, it did provide inspiration in helping shape the present waterfront.

A significant success of the Plans and Planning Committee prior to the 1925 earthquake was its outreach campaign to educate the public in the value of good building practices and architectural harmony. This education was provided by the committee to schools and civic organizations. With Pearl Chase at its helm after 1927, the committee also crusaded for the development of more high quality, affordable small homes in Santa Barbara. She and like minded citizens wanted to make architectural harmony and beautification of lower-income neighborhoods an essential part of city planning.

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES (1925 - 1939)

One of the most significant catalysts for the architectural development of Santa Barbara was a massive earthquake which struck at 6:42 a.m. on June 29, 1925. The earthquake destroyed or damaged many commercial buildings in Santa Barbara’s business district, most of which were built of un-reinforced masonry. Unlike the commercial buildings, the vast majority of the residential structures in town were of wood-frame construction and survived the tremors, mainly losing their brick chimneys. Because of the early hour of the earthquake, only 13 lives were lost, as a majority of city residents were still at home in their wood-frame houses rather than in the more vulnerable downtown core. Had the earthquake taken place a few hours later, the death toll would likely have been much higher. One positive aspect resulting from the devastation was the opportunity to draw inspiration from its Hispanic architectural heritage when rebuilding the business district. In an endeavor to see the implementation of this architectural style, not only new buildings, but many of the surviving Victorian era buildings were cloaked with Spanish Colonial Revival-style facades. City activists such as Bernhard Hoffmann and Pearl Chase continued to educate the public on the need for and value of architectural controls. In conjunction with this, an advisory committee of architects was established to review plans submitted by applicants. A formal Architectural Board of Review was in place for nine months.

While commercial development continued to expand the downtown core, the introduction of affordable automobiles facilitated the creation of Santa Barbara’s first automobile suburbs in the Upper East, West Side, Riviera and San Roque areas. In these earlier developments, houses were often designed with covered front porches, emulating the traditional development pattern that had existed since the mid-19th Century. Garages were detached and placed at the rear of the lot. Zoning requirements were less stringent at the time and it was not unusual to see a mix of single family, multi-family, and commercial rental housing in the same neighborhood. At a distance of 100 miles from Los Angeles, Santa Barbara became a popular stop for motorists traveling north and as a weekend destination for visitors from Southern California. Tourist camps were created with places for travelers to pitch their tents. Cabins soon replaced the tents. One of the earliest motels in California was built in San Roque (currently 2819 State Street). Largely as a result of increased automobile use the street car company ended its services in 1929.

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929, with its widespread unemployment and decade-long economic downturn, profoundly affected Santa Barbara

THE WAR YEARS (1941 – 1945)

Adolf Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. With the establishment of the draft in September, 1940, and an upsurge in war-related manufacturing, Santa Barbara, like the rest of the nation, reached full employment for the first time since the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. In January, 1941, construction of the military 750-bed Hoff General Hospital began. It occupied 58 acres and contained more than 102 temporary buildings in the Casa Loma area, near the Samarkand neighborhood. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the area's large resorts such as the Biltmore and Mar Monte hotels were converted into rest and recreation facilities for American troops. Other facilities such as the Santa Barbara Airport were converted into military installations. During the war, the city's harbor was home base for two Navy destroyers and their dockside support facilities. A year after the war ended, the hospital was closed. Many of the buildings were converted to public housing units. Several were moved to various locations around town. The last of the war surplus buildings were demolished in 1960 to make way for MacKenzie Park and the Municipal Golf Course.

POSTWAR DEVELOPMENT BOOM (1945 – 1970)

Both the Great Depression and World War II suppressed the demand for new residential construction because of poor economic conditions and a lack of building materials, which were funneled into the war effort. As was the case across the country in the early postwar period, Santa Barbara experienced a construction boom in the form of tract-house developments on the Mesa, the South Ontare Road and Alamar Avenue areas mainly to provide housing for returning war veterans.

While much of the new development was directed toward the construction of residential housing located on the outskirts of the city, commercial development had become an increasing factor. Although Santa Barbara had established a Board of Architectural Review in 1947, by the mid-1950s, the architectural character of the city began to change because of the increasing loss of older structures to make way for new development. The City adopted a fully revised comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1957, and a General Plan in 1964. In response to the loss of several of the City's historic adobes, and to help preserve the historic character of the city, El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District (EPV) was established by ordinance in 1960 to require specific architectural styles in the district. The original EPV encompassed a 16-block area covering the approximate location of the old pueblo. The City Council designated the Advisory Landmark Committee to oversee the implementation of the ordinance as a means of helping to preserve historic structures within the district and assure that new development would be compatible.

There has been little heavy industry in Santa Barbara except for oil production. Oil wells existed on the Mesa until the 1950's. A section of the City Charter adopted in 1967 prohibits any oil development within the City. The oil industry remained very active offshore and several oil drilling platforms were installed between 1959 and 1968. In 1969 the largest oil blowout in the waters off of California, and now the third largest in the United States, occurred in the Santa Barbara Channel. It is estimated that up to 100,000 barrels of oil erupted into the Channel. Crude oil coated the city's beaches and wildlife. Hundreds of volunteers attempted to clean them while working in the heavy stench of the oil. Outraged protestors shut down Stearns Wharf, the facility from which the oil platforms were serviced. The blowout severely damaged Santa Barbara's environment and economy. Very well covered by the media, the event had an international impact, and it is considered the source of the modern environmental movement.

CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT AT WORK (1970 – 2010)

Starting in the early 1970s, Santa Barbara entered an era of heightened public participation in City planning. Most of the planning done in this period was based on community values and planning and environmental principles that endure to this day. Amendments to the 1964 General Plan reflecting these values and principles were adopted.

Although the City had a height ordinance limiting buildings in commercial zones to 60' and 4 stories since 1930, the Council could and did grant variances to it. When the Council approved a two 9-story condo towers project in 1969 where Alice Keck Park Memorial Gardens are now, they were sued and lost for violating their own ordinance. In 1972 City voters approved an amendment to the charter which states that “high buildings are inimical to the basic residential and historical character of the City” and which placed the height limits in the charter where the Council could not change them.

In 1977, the boundaries of EPV were expanded to include more of the commercial core of the city and the principal streets which are entrances to the city from Highway 101. At this time, a new, more visible design review body called the Historic Landmarks Committee was established to administer the EPV ordinance. Eventually the importance of the established architectural guidelines for the architecture within EPV necessitated the elevation of the Historic Landmarks Committee to a Historic Landmarks Commission by City Charter amendment. New projects and proposals for exterior alterations within EPV are rigorously reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission for compliance with the EPV Design Guidelines and the Municipal Code.

The Architectural Board of Review was re-established by ordinance in 1947. Both of these review bodies provide the public with opportunities to comment on individual development projects and to participate in the drafting of guidelines.

Santa Barbara is in the process of creating a number of historic and design districts. The first historic district, the Riviera Campus Historic District, was created in 2005, and several more are to follow. Additional architectural surveys will continue to identify future Historic Districts, while fostering the preservation of significant neighborhoods and structures.

The City of Santa Barbara has long recognized that signs are an integral part of the cityscape and, as such, can detract from or enhance the City's image and character. The City first adopted a sign ordinance in 1922. Over time bans on billboards and pole signs removed their visual clutter and re-opened views. A revised sign ordinance adopted in 1981 regulates size and design to assure compatibility with each sign's context, and proposed signs are reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review or the Historic Landmarks Commission for conformity with the ordinance.

Most recently, the construction of houses larger than the norm within established neighborhoods led to a significant update of the city's Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance (NPO) in 2007. As with earlier design review tools established by the city, the updated NPO Guidelines were created to provide a level of protection for the city's existing neighborhood settings by assuring that new development contributes to the overall neighborhood character.

Another driving force that significantly shaped Santa Barbara was the creation of the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) in 1968, and the Central City Redevelopment Project Area (CCRP) in 1972. The agency has been responsible for many positive additions to the city including the widening of sidewalks and the addition of significant landscaping along the lower State Street corridor. The RDA worked with the Downtown Parking District to construct a number of “almost invisible” public parking garages, which service the Central Business

District. In addition, the RDA and the Housing Authority constructed affordable housing projects that were designed to be compatible with their setting and have the appearance of market rate housing. The development of the Paseo Nuevo Outdoor Shopping Mall by the RDA in 1990 was the significant catalyst for the rejuvenation of downtown State Street as a shopping district. Buildings have been restored or remodeled in accordance with the El Pueblo Viejo architectural guidelines which give Santa Barbara's business district its timeless Mediterranean character.

Also during this period new general plan elements were added and others updated with each one undergoing a public participation and adoption process. Citizens' task forces or committees tackled significant issues such as growth management and preserving the City's character and resources. In response to this concern for the quality of life in Santa Barbara and its relation to resource limits, and at the recommendation of the Planning Commission that a study be carried out, the City Council contracted with the Santa Barbara Planning Task Force in 1974 to conduct a study, which resulted in the 1974 report Impacts of Growth. Amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element and the Zoning Ordinance followed. Significant amendments were made in the 1970s and 1980s to the City's Charter Section 1506 addressed building heights (1972), Section 1507 established the City policy that development shall not exceed the city's Resources (1982), and Section 1508 in 1989, restricted the amount of non-residential development over the 20-year period 1989 to 2009.

Ever in search of ways to provide affordable housing, a public planning process in the 1990s resulted in amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to encourage mixed-use developments in commercial areas. Slow to start, mixed-use became characteristic of development in the 2000's to both good and disappointing results.

All of the above mentioned actions and many more planning efforts undertaken by City government and citizens have contributed to shaping Santa Barbara into a uniquely beautiful and internationally renowned city.

A summation of the importance of Santa Barbara's history for its future was articulated in 1975 by David Gebhard, Santa Barbara architectural historian and member of the Historic Landmarks Commission:

"The past, whether just yesterday, or more distant, is always being reinterpreted. What makes the Santa Barbara region unique is not the "weight of history" on current design, but the creative and refreshing way that it is being continually rephrased and restated."

